

What Was in the CIA's Declassified JFK File?

BY DICK RUSSELL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The CIA has finally bared half its cupboard on the Kennedy assassination. But if the agency hoped to end the dark rumors once and for all, they did not succeed. The question of an official cover-up is now larger than ever, and these documents could be the straw that finally breaks the Warren Commission's back.

In Congress, controversy has been rapidly building over whether to reopen the Kennedy case. Ray Madden, chairman of the House Rules Committee, and, reportedly, even speaker Carl Albert are ready to see action on Congressman Tom Downing's resolution for a select committee. And in the Senate, where an investigative team has been probing for months as part of the Church Committee's Intelligence study, Richard Schweiker's subcommittee assassination report is rumored to contain some big surprises.

Several weeks ago, when the CIA released 1466 pages of files to Freedom of Information suits by lawyers David Belin and Bernard Fensterwald, Jr., first reports of the contents centered around Lee Harvey Oswald's apparent liaison with agents of the Russian KGB and Cuban Intelligence during a September 1963 trip to Mexico City.

But the most revealing material really concerns the domestic side of the situation. The CIA's files raise serious new doubts about Oswald's murder weapon and whether he might once have been an American intelligence operative. They provide further insight into Jack Ruby's ties with mob and Teamster leaders. They admit that Clay Shaw, the accused conspirator in Jim Garrison's New Orleans probe of the late 1960s, did indeed have "past CIA contact." And they bring Cuban machinations into closer focus.

This mountain of paper is, in other respects, largely what you might expect—an often-fascinating compendium of foreign reaction and foreign intrigue, with source's names and agency code-words dutifully excised. There are valuable historical footnotes—including a source's private conversation with Khrushchev, in 1964, who did not believe Oswald was a madman acting alone. For the real buff, there are numerous new theories and suspects—some utterly bizarre, some thought-provoking.

By and large, the CIA seemed diligent in pursuing all leads to a possible foreign conspiracy. This was, after all, its job. And taken at face value, the bulk of the docu-

ments leads one to believe that the CIA hierarchy knew only a little more about Oswald and the assassination than anyone else.

The trouble lies in the contradictions. Let's examine them, piece by piece:

The Oswald Rifle: From the beginning, there was great confusion about precisely what weapon had been found near Oswald's alleged sniper's nest. The first police reports described it as a German 7.65 Mauser bolt-action rifle. That was how it was generally labeled for the first 24 hours after the assassination, although another report called it a British Enfield. The CIA, these files show, as late as November 25, was still calling it a Mauser.

The Warren Commission, however, concluded that the only rifle Oswald owned was an Italian-made Mannlicher Carcano. The Warren Report explains: "Police laboratory technicians subsequently arrived and correctly identified the weapon as a 6.5 Italian rifle." It's always seemed odd that the identification took so long since, as testimony also showed, the gun Oswald had obtained some months earlier from a Chicago mail-order house was clearly marked: "Made Italy, Cal. 6.5." If this was indeed the weapon found in the School Book Depository building, why the confusion?

A CIA analysis of November 28, 1963, adds a third dimension to the rifle puzzle. "The weapon which appears to have been employed in this criminal attack," wrote the CIA, "is a Model 91 rifle, 7.35 caliber, 1938 modification." Although by this time the weapon was being described as a 6.5 caliber, the analyst concluded, "the photographs from American sources appearing in the Italian press show another type of weapon—a 7.35 caliber."

The Warren Commission never mentioned this caliber of Italian rifle, but such a weapon does exist and, according to one intelligence source, is still used for sniper practice by NATO forces abroad. It is apparently superior to Oswald's smaller 6.5 caliber, and a

much more likely and effective assassin's weapon—except Oswald didn't own one.

What conclusion can we draw from such confusion? Were the CIA and the Warren Commission evaluating the same rifle? And what about the earliest police reports about a Mauser? Unless we are ready to accept not one, but two, official errors in seemingly expert judgment, it is logical that either an additional rifle was discovered—or else Oswald's own 6.5 rifle was never in the depository building at all.

As if these implications weren't enough, the CIA's November 28 report makes mincemeat of the Oswald rifle's accuracy—even if it was actually fired at the presidential motorcade. In 1958, said the CIA, "the Italian military authorities decided to eliminate all the Model 91s (6.5 and 7.35 calibers) of various types which were no longer being issued and which were declared obsolete." An American company undertook to modify and purchase some 100,000 of these—at a wholesale price tag of \$2.20 for serviceable 6.5 rifles and \$4.50 for the 7.35 caliber.

However, the report continued, "The first lot of 7000 'Model 91s' which Adam [Company] put on the American market had disastrous results. Many of them burst, with frequently fatal consequences, and many didn't fire. This forced Adam to withdraw all the rifles from sale and check them before putting them back on the market. After taking delivery of 100,000 rifles the Adam Company, with various excuses, did not accept any more."

The CIA analyst concludes: "It is suggested that you may desire to pass copies of this report to FBI. A copy has been made available to the FBI representative here for his information and with advice that it has been forwarded to Washington."

But if the FBI got the message, the Warren Commission apparently didn't. The Warren Report contends: "... the assassination rifle was an accurate weapon... in fact, as accurate as current

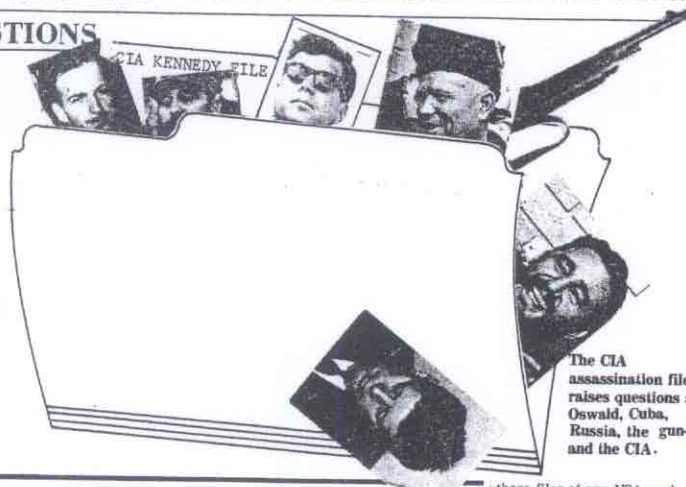
military rifles. . . . According to the CIA, that statement seems ridiculous. If Lee Harvey Oswald really assassinated the president with a 6.5 Mannlicher Carcano, he couldn't have made a poorer choice of weaponry—and he must have been, despite many reports to the contrary, a quite remarkable shot.

Oswald and the CIA: Speculation about a possible Oswald-CIA link was raised, according to a CIA "Memorandum for the Record" of a meeting between its two top Clandestine Services officers and the Warren Commission, on March 12, 1964. Commission lawyer Howard P. Willens began by noting "that Mrs. Oswald had introduced a statement to the effect that she suspected her son to be a CIA agent. . . . [Staff officer] replied that he had not been. Mr. Willens then asked if there were any way of proving this. [Staff officer] first remarked that in him and [staff officer] the commission had the two Clandestine Services officers who certainly would know whether or not Oswald had been an agent for CIA in the Soviet Union. He then said that the commission would have to take his word for the fact that Oswald had not been an agent. Mr. Rankin interjected the view that the commission had not adopted this procedure with other agencies and wondered whether there was not some way to clarify this point more effectively for the commission. . . ."

Although neither CIA staff officer is identified, an intelligence source has named the agency spokesman as Richard Helms. This same CIA memorandum reveals for the first time that the commission was concerned about a book found in Oswald's possession which had certain letters cut out—"giving the impression that this might have formed the base or key for a cipher system. They asked whether it would be useful in our opinion to send this book to NSA [National Security Agency] for review. We assured them that NSA was the appropriate agency for this. . . ."

There is no further mention in

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The CIA assassination file raises questions about Oswald, Cuba, Russia, the gun—and the CIA.

these files of any NSA evaluation. But the question of Oswald's possible intelligence connections did not die, judging from a strange CIA memo to J. Edgar Hoover of March 2, 1965. This, remember, is six months after the release of the Warren Report. "It may be of interest to your office," the memo begins, "to note the following coincidences in the backgrounds of [deleted] and Lee Harvey and Marina Oswald." For public consumption, the "subject's" name has been deleted throughout, but the CIA makes reference to his FBI file number and apparently had corresponded about him with the bureau on previous occasions.

Like Oswald, this "subject" had served as an enlisted man and technician in the United States Marines. He had then showed up in Minsk, USSR, in both 1958 and 1959, where as the only American he became acquainted with the son of a Soviet army general and "claimed to have attracted to himself a group of young Soviets who displayed an unusual curiosity about the standard of living in the United States and Western Europe and whose interests centered around girls, cars, having a good time, and listening to jazz music on the Voice of America." This "subject" then divulged this information in Copenhagen on May 3, and 4, 1961, to a CIA employee known to him as "a representative of American intelligence."

The CIA memo continues: "It is interesting that Oswald also reportedly considered himself to be an oddity as the only American residing in Minsk and attracted more or less the same type young Soviets as did [deleted]. It should be noted that Oswald listed among his close friends in Minsk a young Soviet named Pavel Golovachev, whose father ostensibly was a Soviet army general."

Oswald, who arrived in Minsk a few months after the other "subject" departed, would remain for over two years. The other fellow, by the CIA's own admission, served at the very least as an informant on Soviet activities after he left Russia. This memo appears to imply that Oswald was simply picking up where someone else left off. But why would the CIA send a memo to the FBI alluding to Oswald's similar role, but not getting specific? Had Oswald and the other Marine "subject" been sent to the USSR not by the CIA, but by some other U.S. agency like Naval Intelligence?

Oswald and the Russians: The

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CIA apparently decided very early that Oswald was an unlikely Russian agent. In a memo of December 11, 1963, "Additional Notes and Comments on the Oswald Case," its analyst writes: "Long-standing KGB practice generally forbids agents serving outside the USSR to have any contact with domestic Communist parties or with Soviet embassies or consulates. . . . Yet Oswald blazed a trail to the Soviets which was a mile wide. He corresponded with the national headquarters of the Communist party U.S.A.—apparently with some regularity—and visited the Soviet Consulate in Mexico City. . . ."

"Certain facets of Oswald's activities in the USSR also argue strongly that the KGB would never have recruited him for a mission of any kind. . . . It is extremely unlikely that Oswald—with his Russian wife—was even seriously considered for subsequent repatriation to the United States as a KGB asset. As a re-defector from the USSR he would immediately be suspect and thus under surveillance by the FBI. . . ."

The Soviets, themselves, right up to the highest level of government, apparently believed Kennedy was the victim of a right-wing American conspiracy—with Oswald in the role of a "patsy" whose background would point a false finger at the Communists. One of the most fascinating CIA documents is a May 27, 1964, memo to the Warren Commission describing a 45-minute "Discussion Between Chairman Khrushchev and [American CIA source] re Lee Harvey Oswald."

The memo records Khrushchev as asking, "What really happened?" Then: "[Source] said in effect that the whole affair had taken place just as had been reported in the newspapers and presumably by the Soviet ambassador in Washington. Chairman Khrushchev was utterly incredulous. . . . When [source] said that . . . in fact Oswald was mad, had acted on his own, ditto Ruby, Chairman Khrushchev said flatly that he did not believe this. He said he did not believe that the American security services were this inept."

" . . . Chairman Khrushchev was completely convinced that the true story of the Kennedy assassination has not come out. [Source] said somewhat ruefully, 'I couldn't make a nickel with Khrushchev on this one. . . . [Source] got the impression that Chairman Khrushchev had some dark thoughts about the American right wing being behind this conspiracy although Chairman Khrushchev did not articulate this in any clear fashion. . . .'"

It's not inconceivable that both American and Russian intelligence had something to hide. At different times, Oswald could have served as a kind of "free lance" agent or informant. For sure, his being allowed to leave the USSR with a Russian wife and very little hassle was an unusually generous Soviet procedure. And if Oswald had served two masters—neither of which would want it known, particularly after November 22, 1963—he thus became a perfect tool for anyone else who wanted to ensure an official cover-up.

There is another report which sounds similar to the CIA's "Operation 40," revealed last year

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by E. Howard Hunt. The February 17, 1964, study of "Soviet Use of Assassination . . ." begins: "It has long been known that the Soviet state security service (currently the KGB) resorts to abduction and murder to combat what are considered to be actual or potential threats to the Soviet regime. These techniques, frequently designated as 'executive action' and known within the KGB as 'liquid affairs,' can be and are employed abroad as well as within the borders of the USSR. . . . Foreign political leaders are also potential targets of Soviet executive action operations. . . . There is, however, no evidence proving that any Western leader has been the victim of Soviet executive action."

In a lengthy chronology of Oswald's association with Soviet citizens, the CIA does identify a Soviet Consul with whom Oswald supposedly met September 28, 1963, in Mexico City as "a staff officer of the KGB . . . connected with the 13th, or 'liquid affairs' department, whose responsibilities include assassination and sabotage." But while the CIA spent countless hours tracing the activities of Valery V. Kostikov, the files show they could find nothing to indicate his preawareness of the Kennedy assassination.

Oswald and the Cubans: Given the aura of detente after the 1963

nuclear test ban treaty, it's always seemed doubtful that the Soviets wanted Kennedy eliminated. Cuba is another matter, particularly as revelations of CIA-mob attempts to kill Fidel Castro have given rise to a "Castro's revenge" theory. But Fidel, as seen in CIA memos of November 25 and 29, reacted fast and furiously—and considered Kennedy's death "serious and bad news."

Castro's first speech after the assassination raised immediate questions about Oswald's motive. "Is he really guilty?" Castro asked on November 23. "Is he a scapegoat? Is he a psychopath? Or is he perhaps a tool of the most reactionary U.S. circles? Who is this man? Why did he go into action precisely when circumstances were least favorable for a left-wing fanatic to assassinate the U.S. President?"

Studying a second Castro speech four days later, the CIA wrote: "Textual analysis . . . neither proves nor disproves that the Cuban leader had advance knowledge of the assassination. . . . It does indicate that Castro—alert to the consequences which even the imputation of complicity would have for U.S.-Cuban relations—is fully read on the details of the shooting as they have been reported by the press."

Indeed, Castro sounds sometimes like the first of the assassination buffs. The CIA says: "Alluding to statements made early this week by doctors at the Parkland Hospital, Castro claims that no one in a position to do so has said whether there were one or two bullets used to kill the President. Castro declared that 'they cannot establish which are the entry and exit wounds,' implying that more than one assassin was involved, and that the President was struck both from in front and behind. . . ."

Castro's speeches notwithstanding, the CIA's most intensive early efforts concentrated on possible Cuban involvement. Curiously, some of the most persistent field reports spoke of complicity with the Chinese. A foreign diplomat, a source in Chicago, a letter to the U.S. embassy in Sweden, and even a letter postmarked December 2 from Havana, all conjured such a scenario. According to the CIA, the FBI was "very much interested in this allegation," particularly as it concerned contact with a Mexican and a Cuban who lived in Dallas at the time. A memo to the CIA director dated December 5, 1963, describes the foreign diplomat's claim that "These men financed through bank located 14 Wall Street, New York City." Another memo, dated December 9, reports that the FBI "is endeavoring to run down the lead relating to the bank in New York. . . ."

There is no indication of what the FBI might have learned. Quite probably, most of such "source" reports were frauds. The CIA spent weeks tracking down a lead about Oswald's receiving \$6500 in Mexico's Cuban embassy, only to have the source confess he'd made it all up. Only two days after the assassination, an internal memo to Director John McCone said:

"Rumors are now circulating among exile Cubans re possible DGI [Cuban intelligence] involvement in President Kennedy's death. Authors these rumors not identified but it clear this being done primarily in attempt provoke strong U.S. action against Cuba. . . . The memo concluded there was only an "off chance" that the rumors might have substance."

That's the way Castro saw it, too, according to the CIA's study of his speech: "Castro rehearses the details of Oswald's 27 September application for a Cuban visa at the Cuban consulate in Mexico City and reports publicly for the first time the arrest of two employees of the consulate by Mexican police on 23 November. This was done, he charges, in order to fabricate a case against Cuba, and to provide a pretext for punitive action against the revolution. . . ."

The CIA's files do show that Oswald, in his efforts to get a Cuban visa in Mexico City, may have had contact with three Cuban intelligence officials at the embassy there. And after the assassination, Castro did put his intelligence service in Mexico on alert. A CIA memo to the Warren Commission of May 15, 1964, reports: ". . . orders were issued for all DGI components in the country to sort and package all documents according to whether they were 'very secret' [very secret], 'secreto' [secret] or 'importante' [important]. The material, once consolidated, was to be held pending further instructions. All travel by DGI officers was suspended temporarily. In addition, DGI headquarters' personnel were instructed to remain in their offices or to keep the DGI aware of their whereabouts so that they could be reached immediately. The source does not know the reasons for these measures but believes it is logical that they were issued because of the possibility that the United States might have taken some type of action against Cuba and the DGI itself. . . . The DGI files were restored to regular use about 3 December 1963."

Obviously, Castro was not resting easily. But his actions really seem more natural than suspicious. If Oswald's role in going to the Soviet and Cuban embassies was part of a plan to bait a trap in that direction, Castro had good reason to be paranoid. Immediately after the assassination, his own intelligence in Mexico would surely have informed him of Oswald's contact with them. Castro was no fool. He also had little reason, except for the simplistic "revenge" notion, to plot the death of a president who was rapidly working to ease U.S.-Cuban tensions.

The Mexico Mysteries: There has been speculation down through the years that the real Oswald never went to Mexico at all in September 1963. The question arose because the "Lee Oswald" who supposedly visited the Soviet embassy on October 1 was, according to a CIA station cable nine days later, "apparent age 35, athletic build, circa six feet, receding hairline, balding top, wore khakis and sport shirt." Of course, slim 23-year-old Lee did not match that description. So who was the man the CIA photographed and identified as Oswald? Perhaps someone carrying false Oswald papers and blazing a phony trail?

On the day of the assassination, when the CIA arranged to have one of these photographs delivered to the FBI, the agency has said it realized its mistake. The earliest message about the Mexico City

photos has not been released. It's in the form of a personal letter signed "Best wishes" and appears to be an exchange with the FBI. It is dated November 22: "Reference is made to our conversation of 22 November in which I requested permission to give the legal attache copies of photographs of a certain person who is known to you. At 5 p.m. Mexico time on 22 November, the ambassador decided that this was important enough to have a member of the legal attache's office take copies of these pictures to Dallas, Texas. The naval attache is making a special flight from Mexico City for this purpose. The legal attache's officer who is going to Dallas has promised to mail this material to you for me. Copies of these photographs are also being sent by pouch which will leave Mexico City on the night of 22 November 1963."

What is the meaning of "a certain person who is known to you"? Did the CIA mean Oswald, and was being purposely cryptic in those tense early hours? Or, if the CIA knew by then that the photos were not of Oswald, did they fear this "certain person" was part of a conspiracy? Was the "certain person," if not Oswald, known to both the CIA and FBI?

A CIA memo to the Warren Commission of July 28, 1964, indicates that the CIA at least found out who the mystery man was—and wanted to bury the subject forever. "The Central Intelligence Agency recommends that this photograph not be reproduced in the commission's report," the memo says. "It could be embarrassing to the individual involved who as far as this agency is aware, had no connection with Lee Harvey Oswald or the assassination of President Kennedy." (The commission did reproduce the picture, without explanation. The man has never been identified.)

The mystery man is not the only unexplained mystery about Mexico and the assassination. Another memo has an FBI informant alleging that Oswald met there with a CIA man whose alias was Bill Medina; the CIA denies the rumor. Then there was an "alleged official of the American government" said to have been in contact with Oswald in Cozumel. And a student who reported Oswald saying, on a visit to a university campus, that it was "urgent he visit Cuba immediately and that Cuban embassy denied him visa."

The Mysterious Mr. Ruby: Although the CIA had "no indication that Ruby and Lee Harvey Oswald ever knew each other, were associated, or might have been connected in any manner," the agency had plenty of indication that Mr. Ruby wasn't as simple a fellow as the Warren Commission wanted us to believe.

Ruby himself acknowledged making a trip to Havana in September 1959, a few months before the borders closed. Besides visiting a nightclub one night, it's never been known just what he did there. But as early as November 27, 1963, according to a CIA memo to the director, a British journalist named John Wilson aka Wilson-Hudson had told a strange tale at the American embassy in London. While working in Cuba and being jailed by Castro in 1959, the journalist recalled, he had met an American "gangster-gambler named Santos who could not return to the U.S.A. because there were several indictments outstanding against him. Santos opted therefore to remain in prison for a

period of time paying Castro in dollars for his rather luxurious and definitely non-prisonlike accommodations. . . ." While Santos was in prison, Wilson says, "Santos was visited frequently by an American gangster type named Ruby."

The CIA didn't put much stock in the journalist's story. The fact remains that an infamous "gangster-gambler" and narcotics trafficker named Santos Trafficante was in a Castro jail in 1959. Under Batista's regime, he had handled the Havana casinos for crime boss Meyer Lansky. And Ruby, as even the FBI finally conceded, had long had peripheral ties to the mob.

This is not the only mention in the CIA's files of Ruby and Cuba. Reports from two sources claimed that Ruby had flown into Havana from Mexico City sometime in late 1962, "frequenting a tourist store owned by man named Solomon

Pratkins." The CIA rather hazily denied these rumors, saying: "Information available to this office fails to confirm that subject left Mexico City for Habana, or arrived in Mexico City from Habana, by air anytime during 1962."

Another source, a Polish citizen, gives the improbable story of having met Jack Ruby in Tel Aviv, where Ruby was "described as high NKVD [Russian] official who recruiting for NKVD from among members Polish army." Such a role seems incredible, but this wasn't the only report linking Ruby to a journey to Israel. Here is how an undated CIA memorandum puts it:

"A reliable source who is well versed in labor affairs informed me today that Jack Ruby (formerly Rubenstein) was sent to Israel last year with a delegation of American trade unionists, having

been placed on this delegation by [deleted] of the Teamsters' Union. While in New York he was also in contact with [deleted] reported to be an official of the Histadrut (Israel Federation of Labor). "2. It was also stated that the AFL-CIO has a record that subject applied last year in New Orleans to the AFL-CIO office there for a job as a union organizer."

Jack Ruby, good-time nightclub operator? According to ex-CIA agent Philip Agee's book, "Inside the Company," the Israeli Histadrut is regularly used in CIA "labor operations" for "specialized training within the social-democratic movement."

Where Ruby is concerned, as with Oswald, a lot of people may have had a lot of secrets to protect. He had been, the FBI admitted in 1975, a bureau informant. He was no stranger to labor, the mob, and Cuban affairs. He was a most

convenient fellow, for anyone who wanted a quick "case closed."

The Garrison Investigation: Very few believed Jim Garrison when he claimed Clay Shaw had worked for the CIA, and ranted that the agency was going out of its way to curtail his investigation. When his conspiracy case collapsed in 1969, Garrison faded into obscurity. Shaw traveled the lecture circuit for awhile, talking about Garrison's injustice. He, too, was an obscure figure when he died in 1974.

Then last year, former CIA official Victor Marchetti revealed that high-level CIA conferences in early 1969 had determined to "give help in the trial." Said Marchetti: "I sure as hell know they didn't mean Garrison." Marchetti maintained that both Shaw and David Ferrie, another of Garrison's

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prime suspects, had served the agency at one time.

Now the CIA has admitted as much. Memorandums on a number of the figures in Garrison's probe were prepared in 1967 and 1968 for the deputy director of plans. By the summer of 1967, the agency was very concerned about "Garrison-Inspired Publicity Regarding Classified CIA Information in Warren Commission Files." The National Archives had accidentally provided a Garrison staffer with a list of all the CIA's classified assassination documents. "While one cannot condone National Archives' action in this matter," a CIA official wrote, "nevertheless I do not feel that the publication of this list will hurt CIA in the long run. . . ."

But the truth about Clay Shaw would surely have been damaging to the agency. Garrison and Marchetti were right. The CIA verified Shaw's background in an April 6, 1967, file for the deputy chief, security research staff.

"Name checks on the subject were conducted in 1949 for the present DCS," says that report.

"The undersigned contacted [deleted] and [deleted] after checking, advised that the DCS office in New Orleans had contact with Shaw until 1956. [Deleted] also advised that certain information concerning Shaw had been furnished to the general counsel of this agency at the request of the general counsel, but a copy inadvertently had not been sent to the Office of Security. . . . [Deleted] was advised that Shaw was of interest to DCS a number of years ago and that specific details would be obtained."

The next memo about Shaw is dated May 1, 1967, from Howard J. Osborn, director of security, to the deputy director for support. "The CIA staff, in a detailed staff study of the Garrison investigation, has noted past CIA contact with only two figures named in the inquiry, Clay L. Shaw, and Carlos Bringuier, in both cases the contact was limited to Domestic Contact Service activities. . . ."

When Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested, his notebook contained the name and business address of Carlos Bringuier. He was a fanatically anti-Castro Cuban whom Oswald had approached to offer his services in the summer of 1963.

Then Bringuier, discovering Oswald handing out pro-Communist literature on the streets of New Orleans, had allegedly punched him in the nose. A few days after that, they had debated on a local right-wing radio program. By then, it might be said they were well-acquainted.

Other surprises in the CIA files are quick takes. None of them were followed up:

●George de Mohrenschildt, a petroleum engineer with possible intelligence ties who aquired the Oswalds around Dallas's Russian community until April 1963, is quoted in a July 1964 file as voicing the following sentiments in Haiti after the assassination: "De Mohrenschildt said that President Kennedy was hated by the Dallas elite, and he felt that it was very likely that certain reactionary elements in Dallas had organized a plot to get rid of Kennedy and used a disturbed person such as Oswald to achieve their ends. . . ." In two days of testimony before the Warren Commission, De Mohrenschildt was never questioned about those remarks.

●A Cuban named Ruedolo, once in a training camp for the Bay of Pigs invasion, apparently arrived in Spain without a valid visa on November 27, 1963, and landed in a Madrid jail. "Can you find out why police think he was expelled from U.S. and how he got to Spain?" a CIA memo asks. "Any ideas on how this story linking him with assassination of president may have originated?" A later memo records: "Report subject's involvement in assassination appears have originated in New York." This is the last we know of Ruedolo.

●An early report out of Mexico City describes an Ernesto Rodriguez of New Orleans as well-ac-

quainted with Oswald. "According to Maria Rodriguez de Lopez, her son-in-law has tape-recorded conversations with Oswald." The CIA notes that the information was passed to the FBI. So much for Ernesto Rodriguez.

The final question is why the CIA turned over 500 of its 1100 classified assassination files to public scrutiny. Conceivably, they simply wanted to avoid a court fight. After Bernard Fensterwald, Jr., filed suit for the files last October, the matter was assigned to D. C. District Court and Judge John Sirica.

"We went to the wire on a trial, then the CIA suggested we meet instead," says Fensterwald, the Washington attorney for James McCord and James Earl Ray who also runs the other "CIA" (Committee to Investigate Assassinations). "I'd asked originally for five computer printouts on Oswald, his aliases, and Marina Oswald. I got absolute gobbledygook. One page of hieroglyphics out of their computer—just an index. So I got George O'Toole, who helped install their computer system, to go out there with me. They said, 'What you're really interested in is the stuff on the shelf. Give us a couple months to go over the classification.'"

"This has not been done at random. If the FBI was doing it, I'd conclude they didn't know what was significant. But the CIA knows what they're doing. They're putting out a lot of information and I don't know why."

Fensterwald is still working to get his hands on the CIA's last 600 files. His intention, he says, is to deliver them to John Sirica for his perusal.

So the Watergate parallels continue. Perhaps, as with the Watergate break-in, the assassination question will one day seem a side issue to the cover-up that followed.